

The House of Stokes

SOME FIRST FACTS

The family is of Norman origin, and claims to be a branch of the ancient and illustrious house of Montespedan, now apparently extinct. From old documents it appears that the removal to England was after the Conquest, when honors and possessions were assigned the family there. Some of the name are found at the court of King John at the beginning of the thirteenth century. It is interesting to note the variant spellings. Petro de Stoko witnesses two charters of King John, in 1201, and again in 1206. Aleyn Stokes was one of the executors of the will of Edward, Prince of Wales, 1376. Adrian Stokes, "country gentleman," married Frances, Duchess of Suffolk, granddaughter of Henry VII, widow of Earl Grey, and mother of Lady Jane Grey, pretender to the English crown.

SIR ADAM DE STOKKE

This gentleman is the first from which our line is traced. He is first mentioned in 1301. In 1312, records in the Tower of London show him possessed of the manors of Stokke and Rutishall, County Wilts. The rector of Great Bedwin church, Hungerford, Wilts, writes me October, 1914, that his monument and effigy, in full knightly armor, are still there as "treasured memorials." The rector gives me a description too long to quote here. In the effigy Sir Adam's legs are *crossed*, which commonly indicated a Crusader. We have no other evidence of this, however.

THE GREAT PEDIGREE

This is at Stanshawes, and "is about three-fourths of a yard wide, and four and a half yards long, composed of several skins glued together. The arms amounting to over